

Statement of the Honorable Tim Bishop  
Debate on the Rule for H.R. 609  
March 29, 2006

Mr. Speaker, for 29 years, I was the chief administrative officer on a college campus and spent a lot of time with faculty, parents, staff, and all constituencies of the higher education community. Over a hundred amendments have been offered, underscoring the importance of this bill and of this issue to the Congress and our future

I understand that there will be a second rule, but I am troubled that the Rules committee thus far seems to have excluded a number of important amendments that would have taken a bill that many of us have problems with, and made it better.

We are talking about getting this bill through this week. What's the rush? Why do we have to take the most important issue of our future and rush through the consideration of a bill that is going to have far-reaching consequences for the next several years. Isn't this what the American people sent us here to do? To debate the issues of importance to our future?

Some specific issues: There is an amendment with respect to whether or not the federal government should have a role in evaluating transfer credit? Isn't that an issue that this body should debate? Shouldn't this body debate whether or not we should extend the tuition deduction that expired on December 31<sup>st</sup> and that primarily benefits the middle class?

Shouldn't we debate a reasonable change to the needs analysis system – the fundamental system that determines a family's ability to pay, which determines their eligibility for aid, which in turn determines whether their children are able to attend college?

These are just some of the issues that at least thus far the Rules Committee has excluded from consideration. In so doing, I would say that the American people and certainly the students of this country are not being well served.

As Mr. McKeon, our chairman, just said, education should be the last issue that we should be politicizing, but it appears that is precisely what we are doing. Simply put, H.R. 609 fails to achieve its goal. We said the goal would be to make college more affordable and to expand access to help Americans pursue the dream of a college education

HR 609 in its presents falls woefully short of that goal. I say let's vote down the rule, send the bill back to the committee, and let's try again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.